

CLAIMS

1. A method of monitoring a database, comprising notifying a database subscriber by instant messaging when an entry in the database is altered.
- 5 2. A method according to claim 1, wherein a database entry is altered by addition of a new database entry.
3. A method according to claim 1, wherein a database entry is altered by amendment of an existing database entry.
4. A method according to claim 1, wherein a database entry is altered by deletion of an existing database entry.
- 10 5. A method according to claim 1 wherein said database is an auction database, said subscriber being an auction bidder, and said alteration of a database entry being the addition to an auction of an item of interest to the auction bidder.
- 15 6. A method according to claim 1 wherein said database is an electronic games database comprising a plurality of entries associated with a game, said subscriber being a player of said game, and said alteration of a database entry being an action in said game which affects the player.
- 20 7. A method according to claim 6 wherein the game is a character-based game, said player being associated with a character in the game, the action being an occurrence associated with said character.
- 25 8. A method according to claim 7 wherein said game is an on-line interactive game.
9. A method according to claim 1, further comprising the step of determining whether the subscriber is present to receive said message.

10. A method according to claim 9 wherein if the subscriber is not present, a nominated delegate is notified by instant messaging.
11. A method according to claim 10, further comprising the 5 step of determining the presence of the delegate, wherein the delegate is notified if present.
12. A computer system adapted for monitoring a database, comprising means for notifying a database subscriber by instant messaging when an entry in the database is altered.
- 10 13. A computer system according to claim 12, comprising means for altering a database entry by addition of a new database entry.
14. A computer system according to claim 12, comprising means for altering a database entry by amendment of an existing 15 database entry.
15. A computer system according to claim 12, comprising means for altering a database entry by deletion of an existing database entry.
16. A computer system according to claim 12 wherein said 20 database is an auction database, said subscriber being an auction bidder, wherein the computer system comprises means for alteration of a database entry by the addition to an auction of an item of interest to the auction bidder.
17. A computer system according to claim 12 wherein said 25 database is an electronic games database comprising a plurality of entries associated with a game, said subscriber being a player of said game, wherein the computer system comprises means for alteration of a database entry based on an action in said game which affects the player.

18. A computer system according to claim 17 wherein the game is a character-based game, said player being associated with a character in the game, the action being an occurrence associated with said character.
- 5 19. A computer system according to claim 18 wherein said game is an on-line interactive game.
20. A computer system according to claim 12, further comprising presence means for determining whether the subscriber is present to receive said message.
- 10 21. A computer system according to claim 20 further comprising means, responsive to the subscriber not being present, for notifying a nominated delegate by instant messaging.
22. A computer system according to claim 21, further comprising means for determining the presence of the delegate, and means for notifying the delegate if present.
- 15 23. A method of processing a workflow comprising a plurality of tasks, in which completion of at least one task is notified by instant messaging.
24. A method according to claim 23 wherein the notification is to an owner of a subsequent task.
- 20 25. A method according to claim 23 or claim 24 further comprising storing an identity associated with said workflow in a database.
26. A method according to claim 25 wherein said database stores the identity of a plurality of workflows.
- 25 27. A method according to claim 25 further comprising the step of storing a status associated with the current state of the workflow.

28. A method according to claim 27 wherein the status is updated responsive to the notification by instant messaging of a task associated with the workflow.
29. A method according to claim 28 wherein the updating of the status is notified by instant messaging.
5
30. A method according to claim 23, in which completion of at least one task is notified by a plurality of messages utilising instant messaging.
31. A method according to claim 30 wherein there is associated a plurality of users with said workflow, each message being associated with one of said users.
10
32. A method according to claim 31 wherein each task is completed by one of said users.
33. A method according to claim 32 wherein at least one task is determined by a user.
15
34. A method according to claim 33 wherein at least one task is the preparation of a document, and at least one further task is a preparation of a comment on a document.
35. A method according to claim 34 wherein the workflow is the preparation of a report.
20
36. A method according to claim 23 further comprising determining the presence of a recipient of said instant messaging.
37. A method according to claim 36, wherein is said recipient is not present, the instant messaging is directed to a nominated delegate.
25
38. A computer system adapted to process a workflow comprising a plurality of tasks, in which completion of at least one task is notified by instant messaging.

39. A computer system according to claim 38 including means adapted to notify an owner of a subsequent task.
40. A computer system according to claim 38 or claim 39 including means for storing an identity associated with said 5 workflow in a database.
41. A computer system according to claim 40 wherein said database is adapted to store the identity of a plurality of workflows.
42. A computer system according to claim 40 including means 10 for storing a status associated with the current state of the workflow.
43. A computer system according to claim 42 including means adapted to update the status responsive to the notification by instant messaging of a task associated with the workflow.
- 15 44. A computer system according to claim 43 including means for notifying updating of the status by instant messaging.
45. A computer system according to claim 38, including means for, responsive to completion of at least one task, for transmitting a plurality of messages utilising instant 20 messaging.
46. A computer system according to claim 45 wherein there is associated a plurality of users with said workflow, each message being associated with one of said users.
47. A computer system according to claim 46 wherein each task 25 is completed by one of said users.
48. A computer system according to claim 47 wherein at least one task is determined by a user.
49. A computer system according to claim 48 wherein at least one task is the preparation of a document, and at least one 30 further task is a preparation of a comment on a document.

50. A computer system according to claim 38 wherein the workflow is the preparation of a report.

51. A computer system according to claim 38 further comprising means for determining the presence of a recipient of said instant messaging.

52. A computer system according to claim 51, wherein if said recipient is not present, the means is adapted to direct instant messaging to a nominated delegate.

53. A method of compiling a financial report, comprising the steps of:

- a. preparing a report;
- b. notifying preparation of the report by instant messaging;
- 15 c. responsive to said instant messaging notification, editing the report;
- d. notifying editing of the report by instant messaging;
- e. responsive to said instant messaging notification, checking the report for regulatory compliance;
- f. notifying completion of the check for compliance by instant messaging; and
- 20 g. responsive to said instant messaging notification the report is completed.

54. A method according to claim 53 wherein there is further provided a step of storing attributes of the report.

25 55. A method according to claim 54 wherein there is provided a reports database comprising a plurality of entries each corresponding to one of a plurality of reports, each entry including the attributes for the respective report.

56. A method according to claim 55 wherein the attributes include a current status of the report.
57. A method according to claim 55 wherein the attributes include an identifier representing the author of the report.
58. A method according to claim 55 wherein the attributes include at least one identifier representing subject-matter associated with the report.
59. A method according to claim 55 wherein the attributes include a unique identifier for the report.
- 10 60. A method according to claim 53, further comprising the step of repeating the preparing step after the editing step.
61. A method according to claim 53, further comprising the step of repeating the preparing step after the compliance step.
- 15 62. A method according to claim 53, further comprising the step of repeating the editing step after the compliance step.
63. A method according to claim 53, wherein responsive to completion of the report the report is published.
- 20 64. A method according to claim 63 wherein the report is published by instant messaging notification.
65. A method according to claim 63 wherein said publication is within a defined group.
- 25 66. A method according to claim 65 wherein publication is to a subscriber list.
67. A method according to claim 66 wherein the subscriber list is stored in a subscriber database.
68. A method according to claim 67 wherein the subscriber database stores a record for each subscriber.

69. A method according to claim 68 wherein the record comprises the subscriber identity and one or more attributes associated with the subscriber.

70. A method according to claim 69 wherein said one or more attributes includes subject-matter of interest to the subscriber.

5

71. A method according to claim 69 wherein said one or more attributes includes report authors of interest to the subscriber.

10 72. A method according to claim 69 wherein the publication of the report to a subscriber is dependent upon the report being associated with one or more attributes of the said subscriber.

15 73. A method according to claim 66 wherein responsive to the instant messaging notification, the report is reviewed by one or more subscribers.

74. A method according to claim 66 wherein responsive to the instant messaging notification, the report is accessed by one or more subscribers.

20 75. A method according to claim 74, further comprising the step of requesting a financial transaction associated with the report.

76. A method according to claim 75 wherein said request is by instant messaging.

25 77. A method according to claim 76 wherein the instant message is received by a broker associated with the report author.

78. A method according to claim 63 further comprising the step of any one of the plurality of subscribers commenting on the report, wherein the comments are notified to at least some 30 of the subscribers by instant messaging.

79. A method according to claim 53 wherein status of the report is stored in a database.
80. A method according to claim 53 wherein the instant messaging notification utilizes presence services.
- 5 81. A method according to claim 55 wherein the report attributes include a comment made by a report reviewer.
82. A method according to claim 81 wherein the publication of the report to a subscriber is dependent on the report record including a comment from a predetermined report reviewer.
- 10 83. A method according to claim 82 wherein the attributes comprise a plurality of said comments from a plurality of reviewers.
84. A method according to claim 82 wherein a comment is entered into the report record responsive to an instant messaging notification from the reviewer.
- 15 85. A method according to claim 82 wherein the attributes include a quality rating provided by a report reviewer.
86. A method according to claim 82 wherein the publication of the report to a subscriber is dependent on the report record including a predetermined quality rating.
- 20 87. A method according to claim 53 wherein at least one of said instant messaging steps includes the step of establishing the presence of the recipient of said message.
88. A method according to claim 87 wherein if the intended recipient is not present, the presence of a nominated delegate is established and the instant messaging notification made to the delegate.
- 25 89. A method according to claim 88 wherein a notification to the delegate is the original message.

90. A method according to claim 88 wherein a notification to the delegate is that the intended recipient is not present.
91. A method according to claim 88 wherein the notification to the delegate is made after an elapsed time.
- 5 92. A computer system adapted for compiling a financial report, comprising: means for notifying preparation of the report by instant messaging; means for notifying editing of the report by instant messaging; and means for notifying completion of the check for compliance by instant messaging.
- 10 93. A computer system according to claim 92 wherein there is further provided means for storing attributes of the report.
94. A computer system according to claim 93 wherein there is provided a reports database comprising a plurality of entries each corresponding to one of a plurality of reports,
- 15 15 each entry including the attributes for the respective report.
95. A computer system according to claim 94 wherein the attributes include a current status of the report.
96. A computer system according to claim 94 wherein the attributes include an identifier representing the author of the report.
- 20 97. A computer system according to claim 94 wherein the attributes include at least one identifier representing subject-matter associated with the report.
- 25 98. A computer system according to claim 94 wherein the attributes include a unique identifier for the report.
99. A computer system according to claim 92, wherein further comprising publishing the report.

100. A computer system according to claim 99 comprising means adapted to publish the report by instant messaging notification.

101. A computer system according to claim 99 wherein publication is to a subscriber list.

102. A computer system according to claim 101 wherein the subscriber list is stored in a subscriber database.

103. A computer system according to claim 102 wherein the subscriber database stores a record for each subscriber.

10 104. A computer system according to claim 103 wherein the record comprises the subscriber identity and one or more attributes associated with the subscriber.

105. A method according to claim 104 wherein said one or more attributes includes subject-matter of interest to the subscriber.

106. A method according to claim 104 wherein said one or more attributes includes report authors of interest to the subscriber.

107. A method according to claim 104 wherein the publication of the report to a subscriber is dependent upon the report being associated with one or more attributes of the said subscriber.

108. A method according to claim 101 wherein responsive to the instant messaging notification, the report is reviewed by one or more subscribers.

109. A method according to claim 101 wherein responsive to the instant messaging notification, the report is accessed by one or more subscribers.

110. A method according to claim 109, further comprising the step of requesting a financial transaction associated with the report.
111. A method according to claim 109 wherein said request is by 5 instant messaging.
112. A method according to claim 111 wherein the instant message is received by a broker associated with the report author.
113. A method according to claim 108 further comprising the 10 step of any one of the plurality of subscribers commenting on the report, wherein the comments are notified to at least some of the subscribers by instant messaging.
114. A method according to claim 92 wherein status of the report is stored in a database.
115. A method according to claim 92 wherein the instant messaging notification utilizes presence services.
116. A method according to claim 104 wherein the report attributes include a comment made by a report reviewer.
117. A method according to claim 113 wherein the publication of 20 the report to a subscriber is dependent on the report record including a comment from a predetermined report reviewer.
118. A method according to claim 117 wherein the attributes comprise a plurality of said comments from a plurality of reviewers.
119. A method according to claim 118 wherein a comment is 25 entered into the report record responsive to an instant messaging notification from the reviewer.
120. A method according to claim 119 wherein the attributes include a quality rating provided by a report reviewer.

121. A method according to claim 118 wherein the publication of the report to a subscriber is dependent on the report record including a predetermined quality rating.
122. A method according to claim 92 wherein at least one of 5 said instant messaging steps includes the step of establishing the presence of the recipient of said message.
123. A method according to claim 122 wherein if the intended recipient is not present, the presence of a nominated delegate is established and the instant messaging 10 notification made to the delegate.
124. A method according to claim 123 wherein a notification to the delegate is the original message.
125. A method according to claim 123 wherein a notification to the delegate is that the intended recipient is not present.
126. A method according to claim 123 wherein the notification to the delegate is made after an elapsed time.
127. A subscriber database for storing a record for subscribers, the record comprising the subscriber identity and one or more attributes associated with the subscriber, 20 the subscriber database being associated with the notification of reports by instant messaging.
128. A subscriber database according to claim 127 wherein said one or more attributes includes subject-matter of interest to the subscriber.
129. A subscriber database according to claim 129 wherein said one or more attributes includes report authors of interest to the subscriber.